

## The Romance of a Slipper

By Virginia Lilla Wentz

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When Miss Graham had finished her letter and laid her pen down, she sat for a moment looking at the small window and looked across at the pine woods. It was one of those country windows to open which demands strength which is at the strength of ten and which, when opened, refuse to be closed again save with the archaic force of a battering ram.

"Even though I do live in a Harlem flat," pondered Kitty Graham, "I've been accustomed to windows that remained up without any visible means of support. Since I've come to the Berishires I've learned better. Seems to me that one volume of Thackeray doesn't keep the window up high enough." She gazed searchingly about the room. "I reckon one of my high heeled slippers will about do it," and she inserted that bit of personal property with no mean skill, so that the heel raised the sash two or three inches higher.

"That isn't much," she concluded, a trifle warm with the exertion, "but it's something. And how delicious that pine fragrance is!" She bent her pretty head so that her little nose drew in long breaths of the sweet air. Then, picking up her letter, she went downstairs.

"Mrs. Barnes," came Miss Graham's silvery voice from the hall, "shall I leave my letter here on the table? Or is it too late for the butcher?"

"Take it all," returned Mrs. Barnes cheerfully from her rocking chair on the front piazza. "But maybe there'll be somebody along presently on the way to North Adams. You might stick it in the railing in case anybody does come," she added.

Kitty sauntered to the fence and leaned over the railing. But no one was in sight.

"Suppose I walk over to North Adams myself," suggested she. "Is it far?" She tapped the belated envelope against her small white teeth.

"Land, yes, child! It's—"

The gate of the "other house" creaked as it was pulled open. They could always hear that gate creak. Mrs. Barnes stopped rocking and looked up the road.

"Here comes Professor Thornton," she said placidly. "But, of course, we couldn't ask him."

"I'm!" murmured Kitty absently. "Way not?"

The professor was a tall, aristocratic looking man of middle age. As he approached, followed by a handsome colt, Kitty went to the gate and held out her letter with a frank, winning smile.

"If you're going to the village would you mind mailing this for me?" said she gravely. "I should be very much obliged."

Mrs. Barnes from the rocker on the piazza looked at the girl with mild reproach, but met no glance of apology. Kitty's wide gray eyes were following Professor Thornton's aristocratic figure down the road and evolving some question. She turned abruptly.

"Who is he? Why did you hesitate about taking him? Don't you think he'll mail it all right? It's to mother, and it's very important, and you don't think he'll drop it, do you?"

And what Mrs. Barnes thereupon told her was in substance it not in words something like this:

He was Professor Hamilton Thornton of New York City, serving as his mistress star eyed science. But of Woman (with a capital W) and her ways (another capital W) he was totally ignorant. The latest of ice water was warm, so rumor had it, to the look he bestowed upon women.

"And how ever you braced up spunk enough to ask him to mail that letter," concluded Mrs. Barnes, rocking way back, "I don't know."

"Ho! Hum!" yawned Kitty. "Well, the woods for mine." And with a nod of farewell she passed out of the gate.

Over the slippy needles she went till she reached a tall tree whose shaft went straight up, not bothering itself with branches for thirty feet. Here she threw herself down and leaned back in the embracing roots, pitying the people in towns and hearing a sigh of satisfaction.

"If only dear mother could be with me, though," said she mentally, "but of course it's impossible. Oh, this poverty stricken workaday world!" She couldn't help thinking of the pretty little estate in Virginia which yielded nothing and of the subsequent hardship which she and her trail, delicate mother were enduring.

"Well, the doctor said if I'd stop fretting and would try to enjoy every moment of my month here in these fragrant hills I'd be all right for my winter work, so I'm only going to think of pleasure and—ah—bracing things." And while the reinsome bark gave forth its spicy smell, she lazily watched the small and active insects which went pottering about the needles and mass of soft earth.

"Oh, it's delicious and restful—so marvellous," sighed she, stretching her arms above her head.

while she was getting ready for bed, she'd close it from below and profit afterward.

So, staying the sash with her right shoulder, she tried to extricate the slipper and the book, but, alas, the slipper eluded her and tumbled heel first into the path below.

Kitty's first thought was to run and fetch it back, but she was utterly sleepy. "Oh, pahaw!" yawned she. "What's the use? I'll get it in the morning. It isn't going to rain; the sky's as calm as a lake."

The next morning, very early, Prince, the big colt, came running in to his master, waving his tail excitedly, and dropped something at his feet. Then, stopping his tiny length upon the hearth rug, he eyed him expectantly.

Professor Thornton looked at the thing which Prince had deposited at his feet without touching it.

It was a slipper, he saw now, but how incredibly tiny it looked on his expanse of floor, how helpless and lost! He picked it up a bit gingerly. Why, it was absurdly tiny. What queer little feet women must have! He set the slipper upright on his big brown hand—an airy suede bridge across his broad palm.

He'd seen things like this—hadn't he?—on blocks in shop windows. No, not precisely like this, either, for this had little curves—a dozen of them—of individuality. Pretty little thing, but what nonsense for a shoe!

He hesitated a second, then softly opened the top right hand drawer of his desk. "Maybe some one will call for it," thought he. "Then I'll be sure to know where it is."

He thought of this drawer several times during the day, but did not open it. It was queer no one missed it. That night, however, he set the tiny thing up on his big blue blotter. It shone under the student lamp in shimmering daintiness, so soft, so smooth, with such curves! Why, it looked almost warm.

The professor leaned back in his revolving chair and looked around his room, dim save for the desk's circling light. The room seemed empty in spite of its furnishings—great cases of books, rugs, antlers, a favorite gun and a generous pipe rack, and in the midst of a circle of light a lonely man and a suede slipper.

Yes, the professor felt lonely. He picked up the slipper, turning it over and over. Suddenly he cried:

"Why, there's K. G. just as plain, right on the lining, in silver letters!" Prince sniffed at this illuminating discovery.

Next day as the professor was passing Mrs. Barnes' place he saw a dainty little figure in white at the gate. She raised her lovely tired eyes in recognition.

"Would you mind inquiring for my mail?" she asked. Both her manner and her words were of a disarming simplicity. "Miss Graham is my name—Kitty Graham."

"Miss Graham—Kitty Graham," repeated he gravely, with a courtly bow. Then he stopped short and regarded the girl with absorption, a wonder growing in his eyes. "Miss Graham," said he, "do you ever wear slippers?"

"What a question to ask a girl!" laughed Kitty some weeks later. "And what an amusing way to begin a courtship!"

Burma and Buddhism. Burma is a country dominated by an idea, or, rather, a set of ideas, which owe their origin to the influence of Buddhism. The Burman holds the view that this life is a sorry thing at the best and that the wisest course is, therefore, to get through it with as little care, worry and anxiety as possible. The world is nevertheless at the same time full of good things, which all can enjoy. Therefore why toil for wealth, which brings only a burden of care in its train? Why strain every nerve when possession means the anxiety to hold and preserve. The bounteous earth supplies rice for the needs of all her children, and while there are love and laughter and gaiety to solace us, while leisure can be secured and peace maintained, let us enjoy and be happy. Here we strike the keynote of the life of the Burmans. Strangers call them lazy, but they are not idle except on principle. They can work splendidly when they choose, but they have long ago decided that to turn the world into a workshop, to toil incessantly for a mere subsistence or in order to gather up riches, is folly, as doing so destroys the pleasure of existence. As soon as a farmer has made a little money by selling his crop he gives a play, or pwee, to his town or village.—Cornhill Magazine.

A Spanish Custom. No one exactly knows the origin of the time honored prerogative enjoyed by the natives of the Spanish village of Espinosa, who for centuries have possessed the curious monopoly of watching over the slumbers of the ruler of Spain. Every night at 11 o'clock the gates of the royal palace at Madrid are ceremoniously closed by a gorgeously appareled functionary armed with an ancient lantern and a huge bundle of keys and escorted by servants, officers and soldiers, and from that time forth until 6 o'clock in the morning, when the gates are opened again with similar ceremony, the guardianship of the interior of the royal dwelling is confided to what are known as the monteras de Espinosa. Each one of them is a pensioned lieutenant or captain of the army, and while two are stationed in the antechamber of the sleeping apartment of each member of the royal family, remaining throughout the night, not sitting, but standing, leaning on their halberds, the others patrol the corridors of the palace, two by two, until the morning, crossing each other at every point, never sitting down and never uttering a single word.

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Among the many curiosities exhibited in the famous museum at Guy's is a large piece of cardboard bearing the remnants of thirty-five pocketknives, which were swallowed by an American sailor. His name was John Cummings, and he was admitted to the hospital in 1822. A small book, containing also the manuscript of the printed copy, narrates the particulars of this remarkable case, and it may be perused by the privileged visitor to Guy's.

It appears that Cummings during a spree ashore challenged the feats of a conjuror who had made a pretense of swallowing knives. Encouraged by his drunken comrades, the sailor actually swallowed an opened pocketknife, to the amazement of the conjuror. Feeling no immediate pain, he put five other knives out of sight in the same way. In two years' time he had, in the course of his drunken bouts, shown sufficient bravado to enlarge his internal armory by twenty-nine additional knives. When, after his foolishness had brought him to the hospital and subsequently to his grave, a postmortem examination was made the thirty-five knives were removed from his stomach by the amazed surgeons.

These interesting relics are exhibited among others in the surgical classroom, whither the students return from the dissecting room to correct their impressions. Close by is another interesting object, a glass case containing a number of what appear to be illuminated parchments. The gruesome nature of these exhibits grows upon the visitor when he learns that they are simply patches of tattooed human skin preserved in spirits. The inscription upon each enables one to trace the occupation and character of the unfortunate patient from whom it was taken. One was a colored sailor, a native of Africa. On some twelve square inches of his skin is worked an artistic representation of the most brilliant plumaged birds known in the tropics.

Guy's anatomical wax models are said to be the finest in the world. One of these is extremely valuable, the hospital authorities having refused the sum of £5,000 offered for it by a foreign medical celebrity. It is an absolutely perfect model of the upper extremity of the body, showing every muscle, gland, vein, nerve and artery. If took Joseph Towne, a clever demonstrator at Guy's, fully two years to make it, but with him in 1870 also died the secret of the process by which the wonderful construction of the human body was reproduced in wax with such marvelous fidelity.—London Standard.

The Land of Pagodas. From the summit of every mountain, of every hill or hillock, from above the cliffs and rocks and from among the woods of the islands of the broad Irawadi rise the graceful forms and gilded pinnacles of numberless pagodas. Often they are crowned by a golden htee or umbrella. Pagodas are rarely temples in the true sense. They are usually solid, tapering buildings placed over real or imitation relics. Close by, among groves of palms and bananas, are generally to be seen the carved and seven storied roofs of the kloungs, or Buddhist monasteries. Gay and light hearted as are the Burmans, they realize another and future existence as vividly as they do the present life, and the teachings of the great Buddha are ever present to their minds and influence them profoundly.

Patchouli. The plant from which the well known perfume patchouli is obtained is a native of India and of China. It is also grown in Ceylon, Paraguay and the French island of Reunion. It first became generally known in Europe about 1850. At that time India shawls commanded immense prices, and dealers were accustomed to identify the genuine articles by their odor, as they were perfumed with patchouli. French manufacturers, acting upon this hint, imported the patchouli plant for the purpose of perfuming their imitation India shawls. Afterward perfumers took up the cultivation of the plant on their own account.

The Morning Star. The morning star, an iron ball studded with spikes and fastened by means of a chain to a short handle, was much used in mediæval times as a military weapon. It was exceedingly formidable, for when thrown it could not easily be avoided or dodged, the chain permitting it to curve around the arm or over the shield. It was confessedly modeled after a common cactus which grows in every part of Italy.

An Unusual Event. "Yes, I sent my uncle a telegram on Wednesday to say I was coming. I wonder if he received it." "I reckon he won't," said him this mornin', and he ain't sayin' about no telegram."—Brooklyn Life.

Injuries to the head and those we suffer are seldom weighed in the same balance.—Simmons.

To avert a stroke press the upper lip against the teeth with the forefinger.

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